

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 MC-02 OMB-01

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O R 171124Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0998

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

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STATE FOR THE SECRETARY

DOD FOR SECRETARY RUMSFELD

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: NATO AND EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (EPG)

REF: (A) USNATO 2675 (DTG 141050Z MAY 76),
(B) USNATO 0752 (DTG 121402Z FEB 76),
(C) PARIS 4640 (DTG 141033Z FEB 76),
(D) STATE 46987 (DTG 272005Z FEB 76),
(E) 75 PARIS 30951 (DTG 262126Z NOV 75).

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN TERMS OF BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF STRENGTHENING ALLIANCE SECURITY, WE BELIEVE FRAGILE EPG INITIATIVE STILL HOLDS PROMISE OF REINFORCING EUROPEAN (INCLUDING FRENCH) PILLAR OF NATO. WE SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE INITIATIVE AT THIS TIME TO FORCE EPG INTO NATO INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. CONSEQUENTLY, INSTRUCTIONS IN REF D SHOULD REMAIN OUR GUIDELINES FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AND NO EFFORT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN YET TO MAKE EUROPEANS ENGAGE US ON NATO/EPG INTERFACE. END SUMMARY.

2. USNATO HAS MADE ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION (REF A) TO ILLUMINATING SUBJECT OF INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATO BUREAUCRACY IN BRUSSELS AND EPG. ON OCCASION OF PREVIOUS US NATO EFFORT IN SAME DIRECTION (REF B), THIS EMBASSY VOLUNTEERED SEVERAL COMMENTS CONCERNING HOW WE BELIEVE U.S. SHOULD APPROACH INSTITUTIONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF NATO/EPG INTERFACE, AS WELL AS ITS TIMING (REF C). WE HAVE REVIEWED OUR EARLIER CABLE IN LIGHT OF REF A, AND CONCLUDE THAT OUR OBSERVATIONS IN REF C REMAIN AS VALID TODAY AS THEY WERE THREE MONTHS AGO. WE WELCOMED WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS THEN (REF D), AND WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD REMAIN BASIC GUIDANCE TO FIELD, PARTICULARLY PARA 6 OF THAT CABLE.

3. OF COURSE, SINCE THAT TIME EPG HAS MADE MODEST PROGRESS TOWARD REALIZING PROGRAM OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION. SEEN FROM PARIS, HOWEVER, WE WOULD TEND TO CAST THIS "MODEST PROGRESS" IN MORE CONDITIONAL TENSE THAN SUGGESTED BY REF A. INDEED, WE MAY LOOK BACK ON SPRING 1976 RECORD OF EPG AS BEING MOST MEMORABLE FOR ITS
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TACIT ABANDONMENT OF "INDEPENDENT" FROM ITS NAME, A PRAGMATIC MOVE NOT WITHOUT ITS POSITIVE SIGNIFICANCE TO THE ALLIANCE. IN ANY EVENT, WE DOUBT THAT TENTATIVE AND HESITANT STEPS TAKEN BY EPG SINCE FEBRUARY JUSTIFY CHANGE IN DEPARTMENT'S EXISTING GUIDANCE.

4. LOOKED AT FROM BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF STRENGTHENING ALLIANCE DEFENSES, IT SEEMS TO US THAT OPPORTUNITY EPG

OFFERS TO ATTRACT FRANCE INTO CLOSER DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH EUROPEAN NATO MEMBERS AND -- OVER LONGER RUN -- WITH NATO ITSELF STILL ARGUES FOR U.S. UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THIS FRAGILE EUROPEAN INITIATIVE. THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS TO US THAT IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY TO BEGIN WIGGLING OUR FINGER AT EPG IN EFFORT TO FORCE THEM INTO PREMATURE INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES WITH NATO, UNLESS OF COURSE WE HAVE DECIDED TO UNDERCUT EPG EFFORT (WHICH WE HOPE IS NOT THE CASE). MOREOVER, WE REMAIN CONFIDENT -- AS WE NOTED IN REF E, PARA 7-- THAT OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES, PARTICULARLY UK AND FRG, WILL KEEP EPG ON A CONVERGING COURSE WITH NATO.

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5. FINALLY, ON MORE NARROW ISSUE OF FRENCH INTENTIONS,
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WE BELIEVE FRENCH PERFORMANCE IN NATO WORK PROGRAM ON INTEROPERABILITY HAS DEMONSTRATED USEFUL CONTRIBUTION FRENCH CAN BRING TO NATO MILITARY MATTERS. INDEED, SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT FRENCH AND OTHER EUROPEANS WHO FAVORED INITIAL WORK ON SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEROPERABILITY RATHER THAN ON BROADER SUBJECT OF STANDARDIZATION HAVE SERVED ALLIANCE WELL BY ENCOURAGING IT TO DEAL WITH COMPARATIVELY MORE SIMPLE CONCRETE SUBSTANCE OF INTEROPERABILITY BEFORE TACKLING INFINITELY MORE COMPLEX PROBLEMS OF STANDARDIZATION. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE ALLIANCE CAN RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS OVER SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEROPERABILITY, IT WILL HAVE ESTABLISHED A BODY OF PRAGMATIC PRECEDENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR BETTER MEETING CHALLENGES OF STANDARDIZATION AND DEVELOPING HEALTHY INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATO AND EPG. FRENCH RECORD IN EPG DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THEIR INTENTIONS -- OR INTENTIONS OF OTHER EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF EPG -- ARE ANY LESS IN KEEPING WITH IMPROVING OVERALL ALLIANCE SECURITY THAN FRENCH RECORD TO DATE ON NATO INTEROPERABILITY.

6. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE SUGGEST THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER AT NAC AND SECRETARY RUMSFELD AT DPC ADDRESS NATO/EPG RELATIONSHIP WITH VIEW TOWARD

-- ENCOURAGING EUROPEANS TO SEEK GREATER HARMONY
IN THEIR COOPERATIVE DEFENSE EFFORTS,

-- WELCOMING PROGRESS THAT EPG HAS RECORDED
TOWARD THIS END.

-- NOTING THAT WE HOPE WORK IN EPG WILL CONTINUE
TO BE GUIDED TOWARD OUR COMMON GOAL OF CREATING
THE IMPROVED ALLIANCE DEFENSES NEEDED TO MEET
CHALLENGES TO OUR FUTURE SECURITY, AND

-- RECALLING IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION THAT NATO
STANDARDIZATION CAN MAKE TOWARD THAT END AS
, WELL.

7. WE RECOMMEND THAT NEITHER THE SECRETARY NOR SECDEF
MAKE EFFORT AT THIS TIME IN NAC OR DPC TO LAUNCH
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INITIATIVE TOWARD FORMAL ALLIANCE DISCUSSION OF NATO/EPG
INTERFACE. IF THE SECRETARY AND SECDEF BELIEVE THIS
ISSUE SHOULD BE RAISED NOW, WE SUGGEST THAT IT BE
HANDLED PRIVATELY IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH KEY NATO
FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS AND THAT ANY FURTHER
U.S. INITIATIVE ON THIS SUBJECT BE FRAMED IN LIGHT OF
VIEWS OF THESE KEY FONMINS AND DEFMINs -- PARTICULARLY
GENSCHER/LEBER AND CROSLAND/MASON.
GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COLLECTIVE SECURITY, ALLIANCE, GUIDANCE INSTRUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS14468
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760190-0397
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760546/aaaabnfw.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 FEB 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <28 JUL 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATO AND EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (EPG)
TAGS: MPOL, FR, NATO, EPG
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006